CAMBRIDGE
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LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE IN ENGLISH **8695/23**

Paper 2 Drama, Poetry and Prose **May/June 2026**

2 hours

You must answer on the enclosed answer booklet.

You will need: Answer booklet (enclosed)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Answer **two** questions in total, each from a different section.
- Follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper, ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.
- Dictionaries are **not** allowed.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is 50.
- The number of marks for each question or part question is shown in brackets [ ].

This document has **20** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

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Section A: Drama

EDWARD ALBEE: *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

1 Either (a) Discuss some of the dramatic ways in which Albee presents different attitudes to marriage in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* [25]

Or (b) Comment closely on ways in which Albee creates tension in the following extract from the play. In your answer, you should pay attention to dramatic methods and their effects. [25]

GEORGE: [*Sighing heavily*] All right. Well, Martha … I'm afraid our boy isn't coming home for his birthday.

MARTHA: Of course he is.

GEORGE: No, Martha.

MARTHA: Of course he is. I say he is! *5*

GEORGE: He … can't.

MARTHA: He is! I say so!

GEORGE: Martha … [*Long pause*] … our son is … dead.

[*Silence*]

He was … killed … late in the afternoon … *10*

[*Silence*]

[*A tiny chuckle*] on a country road, with his learner's permit in his pocket, he swerved, to avoid a porcupine, and drove straight into a …

MARTHA: [*Rigid fury*] YOU … CAN'T … DO … THAT! *15*

GEORGE: … large tree.

MARTHA: YOU CANNOT DO THAT!

NICK: [*Softly*] Oh my God. [HONEY *is weeping louder.*]

GEORGE: [*Quietly, dispassionately*] I thought you should know.

NICK: Oh my God; no. *20*

MARTHA: [*Quivering with rage and loss*] NO! NO! YOU CANNOT DO THAT! YOU CAN'T DECIDE THAT FOR YOURSELF! I WILL NOT LET YOU DO THAT!

GEORGE: We'll have to leave around noon, I suppose …

MARTHA: I WILL NOT LET YOU DECIDE THESE THINGS! *25*

GEORGE: … because there are matters of identification, naturally, and arrangements to be made …

MARTHA: [*Leaping at* GEORGE*, but ineffectual*] YOU CAN'T DO THIS!

[NICK *rises, grabs hold of* MARTHA*, pins her arms behind her back.*] *30*

I WON'T LET YOU DO THIS, GET YOUR HANDS OFF ME!

GEORGE: [*As* NICK *holds on; right in* MARTHA*'s face*] You don't seem to understand, Martha; I haven't done anything. Now, pull yourself together. Our son is DEAD! Can you get that into your head? *35*

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MARTHA: YOU CAN'T DECIDE THESE THINGS.

NICK: Lady, please.

MARTHA: LET ME GO!

GEORGE: Now listen, Martha; listen carefully. We got a telegram; there was a car accident, and he's dead, POUF! Just like that! Now, how do you like it? *40*

MARTHA: [*A howl which weakens into a moan*] NOOOO-OOoooooo.

GEORGE: [*To* NICK] Let her go. [MARTHA *slumps to the floor in a sitting position.*] She'll be all right now.

MARTHA: [*Pathetic*] No; no, he is *not* dead; he is not *dead*. *45*

GEORGE: He is dead. Kyrie, eleison. Christe, eleison. Kyrie, eleison.

MARTHA: You *cannot*. You may not decide these things.

NICK: [*Leaning over her; tenderly*] He hasn't decided anything, lady. It's not his doing. He doesn't have the power …

GEORGE: That's right, Martha; I'm not a god. I don't have the power over life and death, do I? *50*

MARTHA: YOU CAN'T KILL HIM! YOU CAN'T HAVE HIM DIE!

HONEY: Lady … please …

MARTHA: YOU CAN'T!

GEORGE: There was a telegram, Martha. *55*

MARTHA: [*Up; facing him*] Show it to me! Show me the telegram!

GEORGE: [*Long pause; then, with a straight face*] I ate it.

(*from* Act 3 – The Exorcism)

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ERROL JOHN: *Moon on a Rainbow Shawl*

2 **Either** **(a)** In what ways and with what dramatic effects does John present women's attitudes to men in *Moon on a Rainbow Shawl*? [25]

Or **(b)** Discuss the significance of John's presentation of Epf and Esther in the following extract. In your answer, you should pay close attention to dramatic methods and their effects. [25]

EPF: Yer know, Esther.

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He climbs into bed.]

(*from* Act 1, Scene 1)

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *The Tempest*

3 **Either** **(a)** Discuss some of the dramatic ways in which Shakespeare presents relationships between parents and children in *The Tempest*. [25]

Or **(b)** Paying close attention to dramatic methods and their effects, discuss the significance to the play of the following extract. [25]

[*Solemn and strange music; and* PROSPERO *on the top, invisible. Enter several strange Shapes, bringing in a banquet; and dance about it with gentle actions of salutations; and inviting the* KING*, etc., to eat, they depart.*]

ALONSO: What harmony is this? My good friends, hark!

GONZALO: Marvellous sweet music!

ALONSO: Give us kind keepers, heavens! What were these?

SEBASTIAN: A living drollery. Now I will believe
That there are unicorns; that in Arabia
There is one tree, the phoenix' throne, one phoenix
At this hour reigning there.

ANTONIO: I'll believe both;
And what does else want credit, come to me,
And I'll be sworn 'tis true; travellers ne'er did lie,
Though fools at home condemn 'em.

GONZALO: If in Naples
I should report this now, would they believe me?
If I should say, I saw such islanders,
For certes these are people of the island,
Who though they are of monstrous shape yet, note,
Their manners are more gentle-kind than of
Our human generation you shall find
Many, nay, almost any.

PROSPERO: [*Aside*] Honest lord,
Thou hast said well; for some of you there present
Are worse than devils.

ALONSO: I cannot too much muse
Such shapes, such gesture, and such sound, expressing,
Although they want the use of tongue, a kind
Of excellent dumb discourse.

PROSPERO: [*Aside*] Praise in departing.

FRANCISCO: They vanish'd strangely.

SEBASTIAN: No matter, since
They have left their viands behind; for we have stomachs.
Will't please you taste of what is here?

ALONSO: Not I.

GONZALO: Faith, sir, you need not fear. When we were boys,
Who would believe that there were mountaineers,
Dewlapp'd like bulls, whose throats had hanging at 'em
Wallets of flesh? or that there were such men
Whose heads stood in their breasts? which now we find

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Each putter-out of five for one will bring us
Good warrant of.

ALONSO: I will stand to, and feed,
Although my last; no matter, since I feel *45*
The best is past. Brother, my lord the Duke,
Stand to, and do as we.

[*Thunder and lightning. Enter* ARIEL*, like a harpy; claps his wings upon the table; and, with a quaint device, the banquet vanishes.*] *50*

ARIEL: You are three men of sin, whom Destiny,
That hath to instrument this lower world
And what is in't, the never-surfeited sea
Hath caus'd to belch up you; and on this island
Where man doth not inhabit – you 'mongst men *55*
Being most unfit to live. I have made you mad;
And even with such-like valour men hang and drown
Their proper selves.

[ALONSO*,* SEBASTIAN *etc., draw their swords.*]

You fools! I and my fellows *60*
Are ministers of Fate; the elements
Of whom your swords are temper'd may as well
Wound the loud winds, or with bemock'd-at stabs
Kill the still-closing waters, as diminish
One dowle that's in my plume; my fellow-ministers *65*
Are like invulnerable.

(*from* Act 3, Scene 3)

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JOHN WEBSTER: *The Duchess of Malfi*

4 **Either** **(a)** Discuss Webster's dramatic exploration of different attitudes to death in the play. [25]

Or **(b)** Paying close attention to dramatic methods, analyse Webster's presentation of the Duchess and her relationship with her brothers in the following extract. [25]

DUCHESS: Will you hear me?
I'll never marry.
CARDINAL: So most widows say,
But commonly that motion lasts no longer
Than the turning of an hour-glass; the funeral sermon *5*
And it, end both together.
FERDINAND: Now hear me:
You live in a rank pasture here, i'th' court;
There is a kind of honey-dew that's deadly:
'Twill poison your fame; look to't; be not cunning, *10*
For they whose faces do belie their hearts
Are witches, ere they arrive at twenty years;
Ay, and give the devil suck.
DUCHESS: This is terrible good counsel.
FERDINAND: Hypocrisy is woven of a fine small thread, *15*
Subtler than Vulcan's engine; yet, believe't,
Your darkest actions, nay, your privat'st thoughts,
Will come to light.
CARDINAL: You may flatter yourself,
And take your own choice: privately be married *20*
Under the eaves of night.
FERDINAND: Think't the best voyage
That e'er you made like the irregular crab,
Which, though't goes backward, thinks that it goes right,
Because it goes its own way. But observe, *25*
Such weddings may more properly be said
To be executed, than celebrated.
CARDINAL: The marriage night
Is the entrance into some prison.
FERDINAND: And those joys, *30*
Those lustful pleasures, are like heavy sleeps
Which do fore-run man's mischief.
CARDINAL: Fare you well.
Wisdom begins at the end: remember it.
[*Exit* CARDINAL.] *35*
DUCHESS: I think this speech between you both was studied,
It came so roundly off.
FERDINAND: You are my sister,
This was my father's poniard: do you see?
I'd be loth to see't look rusty, 'cause 'twas his. *40*
I would have you to give o'er these chargeable revels;
A visor and a mask are whispering-rooms

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That were ne'er built for goodness: fare ye well:
And women like that part which, like the lamprey,
Hath ne'er a bone in't. *45*

DUCHESS: Fie, sir!

FERDINAND: Nay,
I mean the tongue: variety of courtship.
What cannot a neat knave with a smooth tale
Make a woman believe? Farewell, lusty widow. *50*

[*Exit* FERDINAND.]

DUCHESS: Shall this move me? If all my royal kindred
Lay in my way unto this marriage,
I'd make them my low footsteps; and even now,
Even in this hate, as men in some great battles, *55*
By apprehending danger, have achieved
Almost impossible actions (I have heard soldiers say so)
So I, through frights, and threatenings, will assay
This dangerous venture. Let old wives report
I winked and chose a husband. *60*

(*from* Act 1, Scene 1)

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Section B: Poetry

MAYA ANGELOU: *And Still I Rise*

5 **Either** **(a)** Discuss some of the ways in which Angelou presents the past. In your answer, you should refer to **two** poems from the selection. [25]

Or **(b)** Comment closely on Angelou's presentation of the natural world in the following poem. You should pay close attention to poetic methods in your answer. [25]

California Prodigal

for David P-B

The eye follows, the land

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At their feet.

from **WILLIAM BLAKE:** ***Songs of Innocence and of Experience***

6 **Either** **(a)** Discuss some of the ways in which Blake explores happiness in **two** poems from the selection. [25]

Or **(b)** Paying close attention to poetic methods and effects, discuss Blake's presentation of the speaker in the following poem. [25]

The Angel

I Dreamt a Dream! what can it mean?
And that I was a maiden Queen:
Guarded by an Angel mild;
Witless woe, was ne'er beguil'd!

And I wept both night and day *5*
And he wip'd my tears away
And I wept both day and night
And hid from him my hearts delight

So he took his wings and fled:
Then the morn blush'd rosy red: *10*
I dried my tears & armd my fears,
With ten thousand shields and spears.

Soon my Angel came again:
I was arm'd, he came in vain:
For the time of youth was fled *15*
And grey hairs were on my head.

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from **SYLVIA PLATH:** ***Ariel***

7 **Either** **(a)** 'Plath's poetry explores the human need to escape.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this comment on Plath's poetry? In your answer, you should refer to **two** poems from the selection. [25]

Or **(b)** Analyse Plath's presentation of the balloons in the following poem. In your answer, you should pay careful attention to poetic methods and effects. [25]

Balloons

Since Christmas they have lived with us,

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Shred in his little fist.

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from ***Songs of Ourselves, Volume 2***

8 **Either** **(a)** Discuss ways in which **two** poems from the selection present animals. [25]

Or **(b)** Analyse ways in which John Masefield presents the knight in the following poem. [25]

The Dead Knight

The cleanly rush of the mountain air,
And the mumbling, grumbling humble-bees,
Are the only things that wander there,
The pitiful bones are laid at ease,
The grass has grown in his tangled hair, *5*
And a rambling bramble binds his knees.

To shrieve his soul from the pangs of hell,
The only requiem-bells that rang
Were the hare-bell and the heather-bell.
Hushed he is with the holy spell *10*
In the gentle hymn the wind sang,
And he lies quiet, and sleeps well.
He is bleached and blanched with the summer sun;
The misty rain and cold dew
Have altered him from the kingly one *15*
(That his lady loved, and his men knew)
And dwindled him to a skeleton.

The vetches have twined about his bones,
The straggling ivy twists and creeps
In his eye-sockets; the nettle keeps *20*
Vigil about him while he sleeps.
Over his body the wind moans
With a dreary tune throughout the day,
In a chorus wistful, eerie, thin
As the gull's cry – as the cry in the bay, *25*
The mournful word the seas say
When tides are wandering out or in.

(John Masefield)

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Section C: Prose

KIRAN DESAI: *The Inheritance of Loss*

9 **Either** **(a)** Discuss some of the ways in which Desai makes race and ethnicity significant in the novel. [25]

Or **(b)** Comment closely on Desai's presentation of Jemubhai's family background in the following passage. [25]

Jemubhai Popatlal Patel had, in fact, been born to a family of the peasant caste, in a tentative structure under a palm roof scuffling with rats, at the outskirts of Piphit where the town took on the aspect of a village again.

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When his son was big enough, he sent him to the mission school.

(*from* Chapter 11)

from ***Stories of Ourselves, Volume 1***

10 Either **(a)** Discuss ways in which the writers of **two** stories from the selection present illness. [25]

Or **(b)** Comment closely on the following passage from *The People Before*, considering ways in which Maurice Shadbolt presents reactions to the death of the old Maori man. [25]

They came down off Craggy Hill the next day. The launch had been waiting for them in the river some time.

When we saw the cluster of tiny figures, moving at a fair pace down the hills, we sensed there was something wrong. Then, as they drew nearer, approaching us across the paddocks, we saw what was wrong. There was no litter, no old man. They all walked freely, separately. They were no longer burdened.

Astonished, my father strode up to Tom. 'Where is he?' he demanded.

'We left him back up there,' Tom said. He smiled sadly and I had a queer feeling that I knew exactly what he would say.

'Left him up there?'

'He died last night, or this morning. When we went to wake him he was cold. So we left him up there. That's where he wanted to be.'

'You can't do that,' my father protested. 'You can't just leave a dead man like that. Leave him anywhere. And, besides, it's my land you're leaving him on.'

'Yes,' Tom said. 'Your land.'

'Don't you understand? You can't just leave dead people around. Not like that.'

'But we didn't just leave him around. We didn't just leave him anywhere. We made him all safe and comfortable. He's all right. You needn't worry.'

'Christ, man,' my father said. 'Don't you see?'

But he might have been asking a blind man to see. Tom just smiled patiently and said not to worry. Also he said they'd better be catching the launch. They had a long way to go home, a tiring journey ahead.

And as he walked off, my father still arguing beside him, the old women clashed their dry greenery, wailing, and their shark-tooth necklaces danced under their heaving throats.

In a little while the launch went noisily off down the river. My father stood on the bank, still yelling after them. When he returned to the house, his voice was hoarse.

He had a police party out, a health officer too. They scoured the hills, and most of the caves they could find. They discovered no trace of a burial, nor did they find anything in the caves. At one stage someone foolishly suggested we might have imagined it all. So my father produced the launchman and people from the township as witnesses to the fact that an old Maori, dying, had actually been brought to our farm.

That convinced them. But it didn't take them anywhere near finding the body. They traced the remnants of the tribe, living up the coast, and found that indeed an old man of the tribe was missing. No one denied that there had been a visit to our farm. But they maintained that they knew nothing about a body. The old man, they said, had just wandered off into

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the bush; they hadn't found him again.

He might, they added, even still be alive. Just to be on the safe side, in case there was any truth in their story, the police put the old man on the missing persons register, for all the good that might have done. *45*

But we knew. We knew every night we looked up at the hills that he was there, somewhere.

So he was still alive, in a way. Certainly it was a long time before he let us alone. *50*

And by then my father had lost all taste for the farm. It seemed the land itself had heaped some final indignity upon him, made a fool of him. He never talked again, anyway, about running sheep on the hills.

(*from* The People Before)

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EVELYN WAUGH: *A Handful of Dust*

11 Either (a) 'I often think Tony Last's one of the happiest men I know.'

In the light of Jock Grant-Menzies' comment, discuss ways in which Waugh presents other characters' views of Tony. [25]

Or (b) Comment closely on Waugh's presentation of John Andrew in the following passage. [25]

'Can I go and say good-morning to the Princess, mummy?'

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'Well, we'll see.'

(*from* Hard Cheese on Tony, Part 3)

COLSON WHITEHEAD: *The Underground Railroad*

12 Either **(a)** 'At times brutal and disturbing, *The Underground Railroad* is also hopeful.'

In the light of this view, discuss ways in which Whitehead balances brutality and hope throughout the novel. [25]

Or **(b)** Comment closely on the following passage, considering ways in which Whitehead presents the escape from South Carolina. [25]

'You're not supposed to be here,' the boy said, adjusting his spectacles.

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May the next traveler not tarry and keep moving up the line, all the way to liberty.

(*from* North Carolina)

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